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PEQUOT TRAILS

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THE SPRING, SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER
BY THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Volume V

Fall, 1953

Number 3

Mrs. Richard P. Grover Elected President

Mrs. Richard P. Grover of Mystic was elected president of the Sanctuary at a meeting of the Board of Trustees immediately following the eighth annual meeting in July. J. Reid Johnson of Stonington and H.G. Schuster of Mystic were elected vice-presidents. Louis J. Darmstadt of Norwich was reelected Secretary and Ralph E. Wadleigh of New London was named as treasurer.

At the regular business session of the annual meeting Mrs. George Burgess of Stonington, Robert B. Chappell, Jr. of New London, and H.G. Schuster of Mystic were elected to the Board of Trustees for five year terms.

Committee reports at the annual meeting showed a continued increase in all phases of our Sanctuary program. While we did not take programs to as many schools as we did the previous year, this was more than offset by the increased number of school classes visiting the Sanctuary during the Spring months. Activities and attendance at the Sanctuary increased. The outstanding property development achievement was the building of a completely new pond.

Your Book Will Help

A new and unique type of book club is being started by your Sanctuary in order to build a substantial and usable natural history library. Such a library is needed to provide good reference material and guide books for those groups studying at the Sanctuary. It would also provide books that could be used by school classes and other youth groups. Our plan is very simple but the results can be amazing if we all participate.

We are asking one member per month to provide us with the funds (\$5.00) to purchase one good natural

(See LIBRARY, P. 3)

First Audubon Screen Tour Scheduled For November 8



Walter J. Breckenridge

Dr. W. J. Breckenridge To Present "Paul Bunyan Country"

The Sanctuary's 1953-54 Audubon Screen Tour series will open with a matinee on Sunday, November 8, at three o'clock in Buell Hall, New London. Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, will present an all-color motion picture and lecture titled "Paul Bunyan Country."

"Paul Bunyan Country" is a fascinating picture program portraying the region made famous by Paul Bunyan legends. It is the story of the state of Minnesota -- land of rivers, lakes, and forests; cool swamps and interesting geological formations. It is a story of the beauty and wildlife of this high north country.

Born in Iowa, Dr. Breckenridge received his undergraduate training at the University of Iowa and his master's and doctor's degrees at the University of Minnesota. He is widely known for his contributions to the fields of ornithology, herpetology and general zoology as well as for his work in building the splendid habitat groups at his museum. His bird paintings and etchings are of outstanding merit and have appeared in many ornithological works.

Disney Films

The Sanctuary will sponsor a special showing of Walt Disney's "Nature's Half Acre" and "Beaver Valley" at the Stonington Community Center on Sunday afternoon, October 18. Starting time will be 3:30 p.m. Members are invited to attend this showing and bring with them friends and guests who may be interested in our Sanctuary program. They will be extended an invitation to membership.

Members will recall that these are the same two films we had scheduled for our annual meeting. Special arrangements with R.K.O. assure us that the films will arrive on time for this showing. We hope that this will in some measure make amends for any disappointment at the annual meeting. Plan now to attend and bring a prospective member. There will be no admission charge.

Wanted!

1 Filing Cabinet
1 Typewriter

These two items are needed for efficient operation of our office. Look about your office and see which one you can spare! We will gladly call for it! Just phone Mystic 5-9248.

PEQUOT TRAILS

Published quarterly, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, by the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc., Mystic, Conn.



Editors

Adele Erisman and
Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

A Statement of Purpose:

We want this publication to be of the utmost service to you—to keep you informed concerning activities at the Sanctuary and in your community; to invite your participation in these activities; and to provide you with general articles of education and inspiration regarding conservation subjects. Won't you drop us a line and tell us what you would like to see published? We would appreciate it.

Where to Now?

Hardly a day passes but that a few people stop at the sanctuary just long enough to ask where the animals are kept, then drive off disappointed when they learn there are no animals on display. Perhaps they have been misled by the unfamiliar term "wildlife sanctuary."

Anyway we should like to detain some of these people; we should like to arouse their interest. That's our job. For we believe there will be no genuine conservation until many people have learned more about the outdoors; we know too that the more they learn the more fun they'll have.

That's why we'd like to see our visitors have a good time at the sanctuary while we try to interest them along the way in a few basic conservation ideas. Most of them have heard by now the over-all definition: conservation means good management -- wise use. But we have to amplify this: We have to give it meaning. We have to convince people (1) that food and fiber must be produced on a more permanent basis to assure enough of both for future generations; (2) that typical areas of undisturbed land must be set aside now for study and for pleasure in years to come; (3) that only under wise regulation can trees and animals be continuously harvested, as well as enjoyed, without depleting our reserves; (4) that rainfall can supply us with plenty of good water for our many needs, but only if it is held back long enough to minimize flood damage and then kept clean on its slow trip to the sea. We should like to demonstrate these ideas so well that our visitors will enjoy hearing them and will want to tell others about them.

It's a big story, yes, but there are many good ways to tell it; and we intend to use more of them, even though we are always limited by shortages of money, personnel and physical equip-

ment. Perhaps as we make more use of the techniques available to us we may even intrigue some of these people who have come to see a zoo!

Certainly our fields, woods and streams should be made as attractive as possible to look at; for esthetic appreciation is one important kind of wise use. Every year, spring and fall, we should be doing more planting, with later essential weeding, mulching, watering and pruning. We can get some young trees and shrubs from state nurseries at little or no cost. Others can be collected and we will welcome contributions from our members, particularly of any surplus berry-bearing shrubs and trees they have in their gardens or on their farms. Another form of planting - at least we like to call it that - involves pure muscle. It is a matter of removing competition to give valuable plants the light and room they need in order to develop and bear fruit. This is most important; anyone who knows plants and is good with an ax could be a great help.

Another of our plans is to make more trail signs and museum exhibits to demonstrate certain ecological principles like plant and animal communities, succession and food chains. We can have no understanding of the outdoors without recognizing these principles. Then we should like to show some of the actual methods now in use by land management technicians -- there are some thirty odd soil conservation practices some of which we should all know about. But we lack wall space for exhibits; perhaps we can get around this with movable panels mounted on easels.

We plan several permanent exhibits as identification aids, things like a tray of growing plants, a collection of acorns, cones and nuts, of local rocks, more birds' nests and some fern and leaf prints.

We plan the new series of trail signs to tell a consecutive story and to supply the answers to a questionnaire that will be given to every visitor as a substitute for a personal guide when none is available.

We are going to enlarge our vitally important school program. We are scheduling a year round series of field trips. We are continuing the Audubon Screen Tour lectures.

We expect to add interest and variety to our trails by increasing the water areas in the sanctuary.

This list isn't complete but it is enough to give some idea of our program. Obviously there is too much here for our curator to tackle single-handed. But we have committees to help with the job and they can accomplish a great deal with the volun-

Effects of DDT

The following report from the STATE BOARD OF FISHERIES AND GAME should interest everyone who has been concerned about the effect on wildlife of DDT spraying in nearby salt marshes for mosquito control. We are very grateful to Mr. O.E. Beckley, Game Management Technician, for making this report available to us.

During the winter of 1952, a meeting was held in the office of the Department of Health, Division of Mosquito Control in Madison, Connecticut to set up plans for the inspection of areas where aerial spraying for mosquito control was to be carried out during the 1952 season. At this meeting, it was decided that all salt marsh areas to be sprayed in the state would be inspected by a member of the Mosquito Control Division of the Department of Health and a member of the State Board of Fisheries and Game.

During the 1952 season, applications were received for spraying the following areas:

1. Old Quarry, Leets Island, Guilford
2. Hyman's Area, Leets Island, Guilford
3. Clinton Area
4. Westbrook Area

After these applications were received, the areas were inspected and recommendations prior to any spraying were submitted. The pilot was furnished with a map showing the areas which were to be sprayed and those which were to be avoided.

Each of the areas mentioned were inspected several times during the season after spraying. Below is a summary of the results of the spraying.

1. No complaints of damage to wildlife or fish were registered to this department after spraying and persons contacted in the field did not report any evidence of damage.

2. From a wildlife standpoint, a satisfactory spraying job was performed by the pilot who conscientiously adhered to our recommendations to avoid spraying certain areas.

3. The provisions which limited the strength of spray materials and prevented the spraying of all open water areas were probably the most important factors in eliminating the possibility of causing any damage to wildlife or fish.

4. A 5% DDT oil or water solution applied at the rate of one gallon per acre did not have any apparent harmful effects on animals, birds, fish or

(See DDT P. 3)

tary aid of interested members. It's all fun, of course. Help with it if you can.

DDT (Cont. from P. 2)

crabs up to a period of 45 hours after spraying.

5. The 5% DDT spray, using oil rather than water as a carrier, seemed to be more effective in mosquito control and, yet, apparently had no detrimental effects on animals, birds, fish or crabs.

6. Small amounts of spray materials, which drifted on to open water in a few places, apparently was not enough to cause any damage.

The same procedure for checking aerial spraying that was used in 1952 was used again in 1953. Although the survey of sprayed areas was not as intensive this past summer, each salt marsh area was checked after the first spraying and results were found to be comparable to those of 1952. That is, we did not find that the spraying had caused any visible effects to wildlife or fish.

A Contest for School Children

The North Stonington Garden Club is sponsoring a tree identification contest for the 4th, 5th and 6th grades at the North Stonington School. Cash prizes will be given at the end of the school year for the best work done. Prize money is made available through the Chase Fund administered by the Garden Club.

The Extension Forester, Floyd Callward, gave the children an excellent start with their tree study by showing them how to make leaf prints and how to look for identifying characteristics of coniferous and deciduous tree species by noting differences in shape, bark, leaves, buds, fruit, wood, etc.

Many of the Garden Club members who attended his talk at the school learned things they hadn't known before too. He told them that two-thirds of Connecticut is covered with trees. He gave some identification aids by showing the purple colored freshly broken bark of hemlock and the grayish back of the red maple leaf, its teeth and its v-shaped sinuses compared to the greener backed sugar maple leaf with no teeth and u-shaped sinuses, and he held up the shiny leaf of beech with its cigar-shaped bud, and the rough lopsided elm leaf, and many others.

We think the children will enjoy the contest and learn a great deal from it. Perhaps there is an idea here for other garden clubs who want to give impetus to nature study in our schools.

(Mr. Callward mentioned a good

1953-1954 Screen Tour Schedule

All Tours at BUELL HALL
Williams Memorial Institute
New London, Connecticut

Sunday, November 8
Walter J. Breckenridge
"Paul Bunyan Country"
3:00 p. m.

Tuesday, December 8
Walter H. Shackleton
"Oddities in Nature"
8:00 p. m.

Thursday, January 21
Howard Cleaves
"Animals at Night in Color"
8:00 p. m.

Sunday, February 21
Roger Tory Peterson
"Wild America"
3:00 p. m.

Tuesday, April 6
Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr.
"In the Hills of Gold"
8:00 p. m.

A Knotty Problem

(Gleaned from a recent field trip)
If a Knot is not a Knot,
Willet be a Dowitcher?

LIBRARY (Cont. from P. 1)

history book. All members agreeing to do so will have their names listed in our bulletin opposite the month for which their donation has been earmarked. If you prefer to purchase the book yourself, please contact our curator first for recommended titles. In this way we can control the building of a compact but efficient library.

The starting of this club has been made possible by initial gifts from the following.

August.... Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.
September Adele Erisman
October.... Mrs. Richard P. Grover
Won't you keep the club rolling by sending in your book donation now. If enough respond, perhaps we can make it two or more books per month. Let us hear from you. It's your library.

guide to Connecticut trees published by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, 119 Whitney Avenue, New Haven 10, called "Practical Forestry" and costing only a quarter to individuals or 10¢ in lots of five or more).

On Screen Tour



Screech Owl

In the Barn

by Carrington Howard

Did you ever get a close-up view of a colony of barn swallows surprised at night by a flashlight? Almost every nest has a line of funny little mugs in various stages of development sticking out over the edge, while the parents perch either on the nests or nearby nails showing their rufous throats and underparts against almost black shoulders and forked tails. This beautiful color is never so arresting though as is the view of all those wide open, startled little eyes, shining in the light, turning from one direction to another, utterly mystified by the sudden awakening. With such a still close-up you realize what flat heads the birdshave, and what wide mouths, shaped to catch flying insects.

Until about two years ago, the swallows built their mud nests against the rafters of our barn, swooping through the big doors and up to the hayloft. This arrangement was not exactly a car laundry either! But we stretched an old tent fly across the loft opening which precaution kept the car relatively clean until last year when, for some reason, the birds started building against the ceiling timbers of the first floor. This year there were sixteen nests down there and none up above. All of them were occupied at some point during the nesting season and often the nests were filled twice. The car now, of course, was right in the middle of Times Square, so we got eighteen yards of unbleached muslin

(See SWALLOWS P. 4)

SWALLOWS (Cont. from P. 3)

and made a hollow square of curtains, hung so that the swallows couldn't fly over it -- well, almost couldn't! Of course we could have kept the barn door closed, but who would exchange the thrill of such life and beauty for a clean car? Not me! (or even I!)

The night scene in the barn was hardly more beautiful than the day picture. With so many of the nests filled with young, the parents were always rushing in and out, and any intrusion by man was loudly resented. The air, both in the barn and outside, would be filled with twittering, jabbering little acrobats, afraid that danger was near. But, as we kept perfectly still, one after another would chance a quick look into his nest and finally peace would return and the airlift of food for the babies would start again.

One sunny day, after a brood had left the nest and were apparently taking flying lessons from their parents, landing on the slanting roof of the barn for a resting place, one little fledgling landed on the ground and wouldn't budge. The parents kept zooming over him in an effort to get him into the air again but without success. Finally one of them landed right on top of Junior and about shook his eye teeth out. There was a quick takeoff and he joined the rest of the family on the barn roof.

It is a nice thought that, although the swallows leave us about mid-August to start before long on their migration flight, often as far as the southern tip of South America, still we know that, when they return in the spring, they will be coming home again -- home to our barn. For wherever they bring up their families is their home.

A Bird Walk

A trip to Napatree Point in August is always rewarding. A group from the Rhode Island Audubon Club was seen heading out there the other day; they had seen a jaeger and a black skimmer the week before; and our curator reports seeing Hudsonian curlews. Any short walk, not even as far as the point, is likely to yield a good count of shorebirds.

The black-bellied plover is common. It flashes its white rump and tail and shows a white wing patch. The white forehead patch of the least tern and its yellow bill with black tip will show it the light is right. The larger common tern has a red bill with black tip and red feet.

The familiar herring gulls with their dusky young are always identified by their black wing tips and pink feet. The laughing gulls, much smaller and more graceful, have black heads.

Common loons float near shore. Their heavy necks and uptilted bills are unmistakable.

The greater yellow legs, tall and slender, show a whitish rump and tail and dark wings and make their distinctive call of three descending musical whistled notes. The common semipalmated plover, now called ring-necked plover, has a white streak over the eye but shows no neck band in the fall.

The little sanderling is plump and very light with black bill and feet. A big dark grey sparrow with a short yellow eye line and a white throat is a seaside sparrow, while the savannah has a short, slightly forked tail.

The ruddy turnstones are a particular delight as they walk around on orange legs and flash a pattern so spectacular in flight as to have earned

them the name of calico birds.

The little sandpipers we lump together as "peep" are always running toward the receding waves to pick up food. And we hardly ever fail to see a willet with bluish legs, a large, dull bird indeed until it flies.

A list this long can be picked up in a half hour on an average day in late August.

Scoop!!

By jumping the gun before final results are in, we can report that a wildlife survey now being made at the Univ. of Connecticut has revealed that (1) beaver are moving eastward over the state, (2) the porcupine is getting abundant in the north central part, and (3) opossum is all over. This information was ascertained from questionnaires sent out to all land owners on a 5 square mile grid over Connecticut.

Jacob Shapiro, Ass't. Professor of Wildlife Management at the University, allowed us to use this information and wants us to say that only two mailings have been made so far, therefore, the data are incomplete. This year, however, returns should come in from 60% of the landowners and then graphs will be made showing the trends of certain species in Connecticut.

We will keep you posted as the work progresses. Meanwhile, keep your eyes open for opossum.

Plan now to attend the opening of the 1953-1954 Audubon Screen Tours on Sunday, November 8, at three o'clock in Buell Hall, Williams Memorial Institute, New London, Connecticut.



**Wild Bird Feed
Available at
The Sanctuary**

For the convenience of our members and friends, the Sanctuary is again making available its own mixture of wild bird feed. Here's a mixture that is properly balanced for the winter bird population of this area. By volume it contains 25% sunflower seed and 25% hemp, two of the most highly prized grains. The other 50% consists of varied millets and other grains that are appealing to the smaller ground feeding species. The mixture contains no fillers such as kaffir corn, gravel, weed or vegetable seeds. Every grain is edible. Last year we sold more than a ton of it. This mixture is available at the Sanctuary only. The cost is 25¢ per pound. Why not send in your winter's order now and we will prepare it for you.

Naming the Clouds

The nomenclature and descriptions of cloud formations had always seemed confusing to us until we saw this easily understood, condensed treatment of the subject; cloud-watchers and would-be weather prophets should find it useful.

CUMULUS -- Big, white, puffy. (Clear weather)
CIRROCUMULUS -- Mackerel or mare's tail. (Coming rain)
ALTOCUMULUS -- White, puffy, in rows and layers.
STRATOCUMULUS -- Dark, puffy, in rows and layers.

STRATUS -- Layer of fog, low.
NIMBOSTRATUS -- Torn sheets of gray clouds. (Rain)
ALTOSTRATUS -- Thick gray sheets.
CIRROSTRATUS -- Halo around moon; sun hazy. (Coming rain)

NIMBUS -- Same as NIMBOSTRATUS.
CUMULONIMBUS -- Big, puffy piles, darkening below. (Thunderstorm)
CUMULO NIMBUS CASTELLATUS -- Castle shapes atop CUMULONIMBUS.

CIRRUS -- Little white wisps, high. (Clear weather)

Prepared by Robert O. Erisman